



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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IN REPLY REFER TO: A18 MLPA

March 29, 2005

John J. Kirlin
Executive Director
Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
California Resources Agency
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Dear Director Kirlin,

We appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on your March 15, 2005 Revised Draft Master Plan Framework for marine protected areas (MPAs). The National Park Service manages five marine protected areas in California waters. These areas are interdependent with existing state MPAs and would benefit from additional protection of marine areas in California. The goals of California's Marine Life Protection Act and those of the National Park Service closely complement one another. We look forward to working with you through design to implementation of the master plan.

This draft clearly articulates your vision, describes a complex regionally-based design process, and provides guidance to the various groups who will be charged with recommending MPA network designs. We appreciate the challenges before you. Key elements of this process include setting appropriate goals, engaging representative stakeholder groups, and providing science to inform the process, all of which you have identified.

We offer a few suggestions from our experience in place-based conservation as you implement this process and attempt to please many diverse groups:

- Recognize the differences between social and economic factors for MPA design, which may be successfully negotiated among groups of people, and those factors determined by nature, which are not negotiable.
- Approach MPA design as an iterative process—until knowledge of the sea improves, science can provide the best approximation of nature's factors, but we must discover and refine them through adaptive management.
- Recognize that as comprehensive as your analysis of MPAs will be, there exist in California waters other MPAs not on your list that will influence the performance of California's MPAs.
- Take a broad view of "economic impacts" to include all economic consequences and expected outcomes of MPAs, not just potential losses.

Partnerships among California MPAs and units of the national park system can help improve statewide compliance with MPA regulations through cooperative education and law enforcement efforts. The National Park Service also has initiated ecological 'vital signs' monitoring programs in these parks that would be useful in helping evaluate MPA network performance. These parks wish to actively participate in the regional stakeholder group discussions to assure effective communication, cooperation and collaboration for conservation.

The National Park Service strongly supports California's efforts to improve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the coastal ocean and to restore its capacity for self-renewal. We recognize the importance of this opportunity and look forward to working with you on this endeavor. Contacts for the five national park system MPAs in California waters are indicated below. I encourage you to include them in your regional discussions.

Sincerely,

/s/ Gary E. Davis

Gary E. Davis
Visiting Chief Scientist
Ocean Programs

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